1 Thomas Lether, WSBA #18089 1848 Westlake Ave N., STE 100 2 Seattle, WA 98109 P: 206-467-5444 F: 206-467-5544 tlether@letherlaw.com 3 4 5 6 7 UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON 8 AT TACOMA 9 AUSTIN MUTUAL INSURANCE No. 3:21-cv-5442 10 COMPANY, **AUSTIN MUTUAL INSURANCE** 11 Plaintiffs, **COMPANY'S COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF** 12 v. 13 WALL SYSTEMS NW, INC., a Washington corporation; BRIAN BOON and OLGA 14 BYSTROVA, a married couple, 15 Defendants. 16 17 I. **PARTIES** 18 1. Plaintiff Austin Mutual Insurance Company (hereinafter "AMIC") is a foreign insurance 19 company licensed to conduct business in the State of Washington. AMIC is incorporated 20 in the State of Minnesota with its principal place of business located in the State of Florida. 21 2. Wall Systems NW, Inc. (hereinafter "Wall Systems") is a corporation incorporated in the 22 State of Washington, doing business in the State of Washington, with its principal place of 23 business located in the State of Washington. LETHER LAW GROUP AUSTIN MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY'S 1848 WESTLAKE AVENUE N, SUITE 100 COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF- 1

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1	3. Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova are a married couple who own and reside at real property
2	commonly known as 10521 Fox Drive NW, Gig Harbor, WA ("the Property").
3	II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE
4	4. AMIC incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1-3 as fully set forth
5	herein.
6	5. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1332(a)(1).
7	6. For the purposes of diversity, AMIC is a citizen of the States of Minnesota and Florida as it
8	is incorporated in the State of Minnesota and has its principal place of business in the State
9	of Florida.
10	7. Wall Systems is a citizen of the State of Washington.
11	8. Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova are citizens of the State of Washington.
12	9. The amount in controversy in this action exceeds \$75,000, exclusive of interest and costs.
13	10. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2). The events giving rise to
14	the claims in this action occurred in Pierce County, Washington.
15	III. FACTS
16	A. <u>Background</u>
17	11. AMIC incorporates by reference the allegations contained in paragraphs 1-10 as fully set
18	forth herein.
19	12. Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova entered into a contract with Wall Systems in September 2015
20	to construct a retaining wall. Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova subsequently entered into a
21	contract modification in July 2016 relating to the approximately 100-foot extension of the
22	retaining wall.
23	

- 13. Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova entered into a contract with AGES Engineering LLC (hereinafter "AGES") in March 2015 relating to the design and construction of the retaining wall. AGES agreed to, among other things, provide a retaining wall design as well as related draining. In July 2016, AGES and Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova entered into an agreement related to the extension of the retaining wall by approximately 100 feet.
- 14. The retaining wall was constructed during the summer of 2016.
- 15. On January 18, 2017, an approximately 50 foot section of the retaining wall failed and caused a landslide (hereinafter "First Landslide"). Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova immediately contacted Wall Systems and AGES regarding the failure.
- 16. AGES inspected the wall failure and provided additional advice and other work relating to correcting the failed retaining wall.
- 17. Wall Systems also inspected the wall failure and performed the repair work during the summer of 2017.
- 18. On January 24, 2020 there was a second landslide in the same general area as the first landslide and involved the same section of the retaining wall that failed in 2017 (hereinafter "Second Landslide").
- 19. Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova hired Geotechnical Investigations by GeoResources, Inc. to inspect the retaining wall. They concluded that the retaining wall was improperly designed by AGES and improperly constructed by Wall Systems.

B. <u>Underlying Lawsuit</u>

20. On or about October 6, 2020, Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova sued AGES and Wall Systems in the Superior Court of the State of Washington for Pierce County No. 20-2-07915-0 (the "Underlying Lawsuit").

1	21. The lawsuit filed by Brian Boon and Olga Bystrova alleges breach of contract as well a
2	negligence.
3	C. Policies of Insurance
4	22. AMIC issued a policy of insurance to Wall Systems, policy No. BP1733655, with a policy
5	period of January 21, 2017 to January 21, 2018.
6	23. The Wall Systems policy was subsequently renewed from January 21, 2018 to January 21
7	2019, and from January 21, 2019, to January 21, 2020.
8	24. AMIC issued another policy of insurance to Wall Systems, policy No. MPP4096Q, with
9	policy period of January 21, 2020 through January 21, 2021.
10	25. The Wall Systems policy was subsequently renewed from January 21, 2021 to January 21
11	2022.
12	26. The Wall Systems Policies' No. BP173365 and MPP4096Q (collectively "the Wall System
13	Policies) provide liability coverage with limits up to \$2,000,00 each occurrence, \$2,000,000
14	for personal and advertising injury, and a \$4,000,000 products-completed operation
15	aggregate limit.
16	27. The Wall Systems Policies contain the following relevant language relating to the insuring
17	agreement:
18 19	AMENDMENT OF INSURING AGREEMENT – KNOWN INJURY OR DAMAGE
20	Section II – Liability
21	A. Coverages
22	1. Business Liability
23	a. We will pay those sums that the insured becomes legally obligated to pay as damages because of "bodily injury", "property damage"
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or "personal and advertising injury" to which this insurance applies. We will have the right and duty to defend the insured against any "suit" seeking those damages. However, we will have no duty to defend the insured against any "suit" seeking damages for bodily injury", "property damage," "personal and advertising injury", to which this insurance does not apply. We may at our discretion, investigate any "occurrence" and settle any claim or "suit" that may result. But:

- (1) The amount we will pay for damages is limited as described in Paragraph **D.** Liability And Medical Expenses Limits Of Insurance in Section **II** Liability; and
- (2) Our right and duty to defend end when we have used up the applicable Limit of Insurance in the payment of judgments or settlements or medical expenses.

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- **b**. This insurance applies:
 - (1) To "bodily injury" and "property damage" only if:
 - (a) The "bodily injury" or "property damage" is caused by an "occurrence" that takes place in the "coverage territory"; and
 - **(b)** The "bodily injury" or "property damage" occurs during the policy period; and
- **c.** This insurance does not apply to any damages because of or related to "bodily injury", "property damage", or "personal and advertising injury":
 - (1) which were discovered, first existed and/or "manifested" or are alleged to have been discovered, first exited and/or "manifested", prior to the inception date of this Policy; or
 - (2) which injury or damage has, or is alleged to have occurred in whole or in part prior to the incepted date of this Policy, even if any portion of such actual or alleged injury or damage continues during this Policy period; or
 - (3) which were caused, or alleged to have been caused, by the same condition which resulted in "bodily injury", "property damage", or "personal and advertising injury" which was discovered, first existed and/or "manifested" itself prior to the inception date of this Policy.

We shall have no duty to defend any insured or additional insured against any such loss, claim, "suit", or other proceeding alleging any damages

1	1	-	of or related to "bodily injury", "property damage", or dadvertising injury" to which this endorsement applies.			
2		personar and	a devertising injury to which this endorsement applies.			
3	iı	n time when	oses of this exclusion, the term "manifested" means the point any such "bodily injury", "property damage", or "personal			
4	n		ng injury" first became known or was discovered by anyone claim(s) against this Policy, including but not limited to any			
5		iisui va.				
6	BP 00 03 01 10 as amended by C384 07 15; BPM P 2 1207 as amended by BPM 3130 05 15					
7	28. The Wall Systems Policies contain the following definitions:					
8	1	3. "Occi	arrence" means an accident, including continuous or repeated			
9		xposure	ostantially the same general harmful conditions			
10		••				
11	1	7. "Prop	erty damage" means:			
12		a.	Physical injury to tangible property, including all resulting loss of use of that property. All such loss of use shall be deemed to occur at the time of the physical injury that caused it; or			
13		b.	Loss of use of tangible property that is not physically injured. All such loss of use shall be deemed to occur at the time of the "occurrence" that caused it.			
14	1	8. "Suit' "bodi	' means a civil proceeding in which damages because of ly injury", "property damage", or "personal and advertising to which this insurance applies are alleged. "Suit" includes:			
15 16		a.	An arbitration proceeding in which such damages are claimed and to which the insured must submit or does			
17		b.	submit with our consent; or Any other alternative dispute resolution proceeding in which such damages are claimed and to which the insured			
18			submits with our consent.			
19	BP 00 03 01 10;	BPM P 2 1	207			
20	29. The Wall S	ystems Polic	cies also contain the following exclusions:			
21	B. Exclusion	ons				
22	1. A	applicable to	Business Liability Coverage			
23		This i	nsurance does not apply to:			

Expected or Intended Injury 1 a. 2 "Bodily injury" or "property damage" expected or intended from the standpoint of the insured... 3 b. **Contractual Liability** 4 "Bodily injury" or "property damage" for which the insured is obligated to pay damages by reason of the assumption of liability in a contract or agreement. This exclusion does not apply to 5 liability for damages: That the insured would have in the absence of the contract 6 or agreement; or **(2)** Assumed in a contract or agreement that is an "insured 7 contract", provided the "bodily injury" or "property damage" occurs subsequent to the execution of the contract or agreement. Solely for the purposes of liability assumed 8 in an "insured contract", reasonable attorney fees and necessary litigation expenses incurred by or for a party 9 other than an insured are deemed to be damages because of "bodily injury" or "property damage", provided: 10 Liability to such party for, or for the cost of, that (a) party's defense has also been assumed in the same "insured contract"; and 11 **(b)** Such attorney fees and litigation expenses are for defense of that party against a civil or alternative 12 dispute resolution proceeding in which damages to which this insurance applies are alleged. 13 k. **Damage to Property** 14 "Property damage" to: 15 That particular part of real property on which you **(5)** or 16 any contractor or subcontractor working directly or indirectly on your behalf is performing operations, 17 if the "property damage" arises out of those operations; or **(6)** That particular part of any property that must be 18 restored repaired or replaced because "your work" was incorrectly performed on it. 19 20 Paragraphs (3), (4), (5) and (6) of this exclusion do not apply to liability assumed under a sidetrack agreement. 21 Paragraph (6) of this exclusion does not apply to "property 22 damage" included in the "products-completed operations hazard". 23 l. Damage to Your Product

"Property damage" to "your product" arising out of it or any 1 part of it. 2 3 Damage to Your Work m. "Property damage" to "your work" arising out of it or any part of it and included in the "products-completed operations hazard". 4 This exclusion does not apply if the damaged work or the work out of which the damage arises was performed on your behalf by a 5 subcontractor. 6 Damage to Impaired Property or Property Not Physically n. **Injured** 7 "Property damage" to "impaired property" or property 8 that has not been physically injured, arising out of: 9 A defect, deficiency, inadequacy or dangerous **(1)** condition in "your product" or "your work"; or 10 A delay or failure by you or anyone acting on your **(2)** behalf to perform a contract or agreement in 11 accordance with its terms. 12 This exclusion does not apply to the loss of use of other property arising out of sudden and accidental physical 13 injury to "your product" or "your work" after it has been put to its intended use. 14 Recall of Products, Work or Impaired Property 0. 15 Damages claimed for any loss, cost or expense incurred 16 by you or others for the loss of use, withdrawal, recall, inspection, repair, replacement, adjustment, removal, or 17 disposal of: 18 **(1)** "Your product"; "Your work"; or **(2)** 19 "Impaired property"; **(3)** 20 if such product, work, or property is withdrawn or recalled from the market or from use by any person or 21 organization because of a known or suspected defect, deficiency, inadequacy, or dangerous condition in it. 22 BP 00 03 01 10; BPM P 2 1207 23

30. The Wall Systems Policies contain the following definitions:

- 8. "Impaired property" means tangible property, other than "your product" or "your work", that cannot be used or is less useful because:
 - a. It incorporates "your product" or "your work" that is known or thought to be defective, deficient, inadequate or dangerous; or
 - **b.** You have failed to fulfill the terms of a contract or agreement;

if such property can be restored to use by:

- (1) the repair, replacement, adjustment or removal of "your product" or "your work"; or
- (2) your fulfilling the terms of the contract or agreement.

9. "Insured contract" means:

- a. A contract for a lease of premises. However, that portion of the contract for a lease of premises that indemnifies any person or organization for damage by fire to premises while rented to you or temporarily occupied by you with permission of the owner is not an "insured contract";
- **b.** A sidetrack agreement;
- c. Any easement or license agreement, except in connection with construction or demolition operations on or within 50 feet of a railroad;
- **d.** An obligation, as required by ordinance, to indemnify a municipality, except in connection with work for a municipality;
- e. An elevator maintenance agreement;
- f. That part of any other contract or agreement pertaining to your business (including an indemnification of a municipality in connection with work performed for a municipality) under which you assume the tort liability of another party to pay for "bodily injury" or "property damage" to a third person or organization. Tort liability means a liability that would be imposed by law in the absence of any contract or agreement.

Paragraph f. does not include that part of any contract or

1	agreement:
2	(1) That indemnifies a railroad for "bodily injury" or "property damage" arising out of
3	construction or demolition operations, within 50 feet of any railroad property and
5	affecting any railroad bridge or trestle, tracks, road-beds, tunnel, underpass or crossing;
6	(2) That indemnifies an architect, engineer or surveyor for injury or damage arising out of:
7	(a) Proporing approxing or failing to
8	(a) Preparing, approving, or failing to prepare or approve, maps, shop drawings, opinions, reports,
9	surveys, field orders, change orders or drawings and specifications; or
10	(b) Giving directions or instructions, or failing to give them, if that is the
11 12	primary cause of the injury or damage; or
13	(3) Under which the insured, if an architect, engineer or surveyor, assumes liability for
14	an injury or damage arising out of the insured's rendering or failure to render professional services, including those listed
15	in (2) above and supervisory, inspection, architectural or engineering activities.
16	
17	13. "Occurrence" means an accident, including continuous or repeated exposure to substantially the same general harmful conditions
18	•••
19	16. "Products-completed operations hazard":
20	a. Includes all "bodily injury" and "property damage" occurring away from premises you own or rent an arising out of "your product" or
21	"your work" except:
22	(1) Products that are still in your physical possession; or(2) Work that has not yet been completed or abandoned. However,
23	"your work" will be deemed completed at the earliest of the following times:

- (a) When all of the work called for in your contract has been completed.
- **(b)** When all of the work to be done at the job site has been completed if your contract calls for work at more than one job site.
- (c) When that part of the work done at a job site has been put to its intended use by any person or organization other than another contractor or subcontractor working on the same project.

Work that may need service, maintenance, correction, repair or replacement, but which is otherwise complete, will be treated as completed.

The "bodily injury" or "property damage" must occur away from premises you own or rent, unless your business includes the selling, handling or distribution of "your product" for consumption on premises you own or rent.

- **b.** Does not include "bodily injury" or "property damage" arising out of:
 - (1) The transportation of property, unless the injury or damage arises out of a condition in or on a vehicle not owned or operated by you, and that condition was created by the "loading or unloading" of that vehicle by any insured;
 - (2) The existence of tools, uninstalled equipment or abandoned or unused materials;

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- **17.** "Property damage" means:
 - a. Physical injury to tangible property, including all resulting loss of use of that property. All such loss of use shall be deemed to occur at the time of the physical injury that caused it; or
 - **b.** Loss of use of tangible property that is not physically injured. All such loss of use shall be deemed to occur at the time of the "occurrence" that caused it.
- **18.** "Suit" means a civil proceeding in which damages because of "bodily injury", "property damage", or "personal and advertising injury" to which this insurance applies are alleged. "Suit" includes:
 - **a.** An arbitration proceeding in which such damages are claimed and to which the insured must submit or does submit with our consent; or
 - **b.** Any other alternative dispute resolution proceeding in which such damages are claimed and to which the insured submits with our consent.

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2	21. "Your product" means:							
3	a. Means:(1) Any goods or products, other than real property,							
4	(1)	manufactured, sold, handled, distributed or disposed of by:						
5		·						
6		(a) You;(b) Others trading under your name; or						
7		(c) A person or organization whose business or assets you have acquired; and						
8	(2)	Containers (other than vehicles), materials, parts or equipment furnished in connection with such goods						
9		or products.						
10	b. Inc	ludes:						
11	(1)	Warranties or representations made at any time with respect to the fitness, quality, durability,						
12	(2)	performance or use of "your product"; and The providing of or failure to provide warnings or						
13	instructions.							
14	c. Does not include vending machines or other property rented to or located for the use of others but not sold.							
15	22. "Your y	work":						
16	a. Mea	ne·						
17	(1)	Work or operations performed by you or on your behalf; and						
18	(2)							
19	(2)	Materials, parts, or equipment furnished in connection with such work or operations.						
20	b. Inc							
21	(1)	Warranties or representations made at any time with respect to the fitness, quality, durability,						
22	(2)	performance or use of "your work", and The providing of or failure to provide warnings or instructions						
23		instructions.						
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1 BP 00 03 01 10; BPM P 2 1207 2 D. Tender of Defense and Indemnity 3 31. Wall Systems tendered defense of the Underlying Lawsuit to AMIC on or about October 19, 4 2020. 5 32. AMIC agreed to defend Wall Systems subject to a reservation of rights on or about October 6 29, 2020. 7 33. AMIC provided a supplemental reservation of rights letter to Wall Systems on or about April 8 13, 2021. 9 34. AMIC provided another supplemental reservation of rights letter to Wall Systems on or 10 about May 19, 2021 11 35. AMIC reserved the right to seek a declaratory judgment of AMIC's duties and coverage. 12 IV. THERE IS ACTUAL AND JUSTICIABLE CONTROVERSY AS TO AMIC'S **COVERAGE OBLIGATIONS** 13 36. AMIC reasserts paragraphs 1 - 35 as fully set forth herein. 14 37. There is no coverage available to Wall Systems for the claims asserted in the Underlying 15 Lawsuit under the Wall Systems Policies. 16 38. The rights and obligations of AMIC are defined by the terms and conditions of the policies 17 of insurance issued by AMIC to Wall Systems. 18 39. AMIC requests that the Court grant declaratory relief by entering a judicial determination 19 that AMIC has no obligation to provide full indemnity coverage to Wall Systems in 20 connection with the subject project under the Wall Systems Policies. 21 40. AMIC requests that the Court grant declaratory relief by entering a judicial determination 22 that AMIC has no obligation to defend Wall Systems in connection with the Underlying 23 Lawsuit under the Wall Systems Policies. LETHER LAW GROUP AUSTIN MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY'S

COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF- 13

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deficiency, inac	dequacy of	or dangerous	condition	in Wall	Systems'	product,	or a	delay or
failure by Wall	Systems 1	to perform its	work unde	r the cor	ntract in ac	cordance	with	its terms.

- 67. The Wall Systems Policies exclude coverage for damages for any loss, cost or expense incurred by others for the loss of use, inspection, repair, replacement, adjustment, removal or disposal of Wall Systems' product, Wall Systems' work, or impaired property, as those terms are defined, if such product, work, or property is withdrawn from use by any person or organization because of a known or suspected defect, deficiency, inadequacy, or dangerous condition in it.
- 68. There exists an actual and justiciable dispute as to whether the alleged property damage includes damages for any loss, cost or expense incurred for the loss of use, inspection, repair, replacement, adjustment, removal or disposal of Wall Systems' product, Wall Systems' work, or impaired property.
- 69. The Wall Systems Policies exclude coverage for property damage to Wall Systems' work and included in the products-completed operations hazard as that term is defined.
- 70. There is an actual and justiciable dispute as to whether there is property damage to Wall Systems' work arising out of any part of it and included in the products-completed operations hazard.
- 71. The Wall Systems Policies do not provide coverage for damage to property that must be restored, repaired, or replaced because the work of the insured was incorrectly performed.
- 72. There is an actual and justiciable dispute as to whether Wall Systems' work was incorrectly performed and caused property to be restored, repaired, or replaced.
- 73. The Wall Systems Policies do not provide coverage for property damage that is expected or intended from the standpoint of the insured.

1	74. There is an actual and justiciable dispute as to whether there was property damage that was					
2	expected or intended by Wall Systems.					
3	V. REQUEST FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF					
4	75. AMIC reasserts paragraphs 1 – 74 as fully set forth herein.					
5	76. Actual and justiciable controversies exist as to whether any coverage is available to Wal					
6	Systems under the Wall Systems Policies for the claims asserted by Brian Boon and Olg					
7	Bystrova as set forth above.					
8	77. AMIC requests that the Court grant declaratory relief entering a judicial determination that					
9	AMIC has no obligation to provide a defense or any indemnity for the claims arising from					
.0	the Underlying Lawsuit.					
1	VI. PRAYER FOR RELIEF					
.2	Wherefore AMIC prays for the following relief:					
.3	A declaration that there is no defense or indemnity coverage available to Wall Systems					
4	under the policies of insurance issued by AMIC for the claims asserted by Brian Boor					
.5	and Olga Bystrova in the Underlying Lawsuit.					
.6	2. For all interest allowed by law.					
.7	3. For attorneys' fees and costs allowed by statute and law.					
.8	4. For any other relief as the Court sees as just and equitable.					
9						
20	DATED this 16 th day of June 2021.					
21	LETHER LAW GROUP					
22	/s/ Thomas Lether					
23	Thomas Lether, WSBA #18089 1808 Westlake Avenue N., Suite 100					
	AUSTIN MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY'S LETHER LAW GROUP					

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AUSTIN MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY'S COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF–19

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